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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Friday, June 26, 1931.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "More Household Questions." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Bulletins available: "Care of Food in the Home." "Household Refrigeration Charts." Set of six for 20 cents. Order from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

Before we talk about our dinner menu today, there are some letters that need to be answered.

"Will you please inform me," writes a friend in the South, "what is the approved way to keep meat in the refrigerator. I have been told recently that it should be kept in paper. I have always supposed that meat should be unwrapped as soon as it comes from the market and put immediately into the ice-box on a plate or platter. Am I mistaken?"

The answer to that is, "No, indeed, you are not mistaken. You are quite right."

I'm glad that question was asked. The warm-weather season is an especially good time to give thought to caring for all food correctly, but especially food that spoils easily like meat and milk. "The moist, cut surfaces of dressed meats, poultry and fish offer particularly favorable conditions for the growth of those micro-organisms causing putrefaction; therefore every precaution should be taken to keep such foods clean, cold and dry." Please note--"clean, cold and dry."

By all means unwrap cuts of meat as soon as they are delivered. Wipe or scrape off any visible dirt, instead of washing it off. Then place the meat on an uncovered dish in the refrigerator. A plate or platter may be used, or an enamel pan. A square or oblong pan is convenient, because it takes up less space on the ice-box shelves. The meat will keep better if the cold air can reach it, so cover it loosely, if at all. A piece of oiled paper may be laid over the top, if desired.

Why not wash the meat when it comes from the market? Washing draws out the juices and hastens spoilage. If it seems necessary to wash it, do it just before cooking rather than at any other time.

And, by the way, the edible organs, such as liver, sweetbreads, and brains, spoil more easily than the ordinary cuts of meat and should be handled with particular care and used promptly.

Uncooked meat, as of course you know, should be stored in the colder part of the refrigerator. Cooked meat can best be stored by loosely covering with oiled paper so as to prevent too rapid drying out.

The second question is this: "What is a reliable method of removing fruit stains from white napkins and tablecloths?"

Another good question for this time of year. I expect that most of you experienced housewives know the answer to this one. A reliable method of removing fruit stains from washable material, is to stretch the material over a bowl and pour boiling water over it, from a teakettle held three or four feet above it. If this does not work, you must use a bleaching agent. The bleach you use always depends on the fabric. Some bleaches may dissolve certain fibers. Of course, bleaching can only be done on white material. No use taking out the nice blue color in Susie's dress along with the raspberry stain.

Let me warn you against using soap on fruit stains. Stains from fresh fruit, and from some cooked fruit, are set by alkaline compounds, and soap should never be used on them. This is especially true of red and purple fruits.

And, you know, if you want to learn about methods for removing all kinds of stains, there's that bulletin I've often mentioned. It is called "Stain Removal."

Another letter says: "We have just moved into a new house. I wish to cover the top of a built-in cabinet and a kitchen table. What material shall I use?"

The answer to that is, use anything that will not be damaged by hot dishes and that is non-absorbent. Maple makes a very good wood top, if you prefer wood. But, over a period of time, wood is likely to become stained and is hard to clean. A heavy grade of linoleum is good. It is inexpensive, easily cleaned and very durable.

Our fourth letter today is from Syracuse, New York. The writer of this letter has a hint to pass on to other housekeepers. She says, "After starching window curtains, I often have found it difficult to run the curtain rods in-- especially the flat rods. I find that by folding a piece of stiff paper over the end of the rod, the rod slips in easily."

Another friend of mine puts a thimble over the end of her round rods to help push them through without tearing the curtain.

That's all the letters for today.

Let's turn to our menu now. It's a meal with fish as the main dish. If your husband is the kind of husband I see along the river banks every Saturday and Sunday, I'm sure you are in need of a menu to suit his catch. So this is a dinner for the fisherman. Certain foods, prepared in certain ways, just seem to go better with fish than anything else. Crisp potatoes are one especially good accompaniment. So are cucumbers. And as for corn bread of some sort-- I simply have to have that to make me complete^{ly} happy at a fish meal.

So today the menu reads: Broiled Fresh Fish; then, Hashed Brown Potatoes; then, Baked Stuffed Cucumber; Hot Cornbread Sticks; and for dessert, Fresh Berries and Cream. Blackberries would be very good with this meal, if you can get them.

Perhaps I'd better repeat that menu. I'm afraid I read it a little fast. Broiled Fresh Fish; Hashed Brown Potatoes; Baked Stuffed Cucumbers; Hot Cornbread Sticks; and Fresh Berries and Cream.

The recipe for today is baked cucumbers--a different and interesting dish, and an attractive one. There are eight ingredients in this dish.

4 large cucumbers	1 cup of dry bread crumbs
2 tablespoons of chopped onion	1 cup of tomato pulp
2 tablespoons of chopped parsley	1 teaspoon of salt, and
4 tablespoons of butter or other fat	Pepper.

I'll give that list again. (Repeat)

Wash and pare the cucumbers and cut them in half, lengthwise. Now scoop out as much of the seed portion as possible without breaking the fleshy part. Parboil these cucumber shells in slightly salted water for ten minutes. Drain.

Meanwhile cook the onions and parsley in the fat. Add the other ingredients and the **tomato** pulp, and cook this mixture for five minutes. Now fill the cucumber shells with the hot stuffing. Place them in a shallow baking dish, add a little water to keep them from sticking, and bake in a moderate oven for 15 minutes--or until the stuffing has browned on the top. Serve in the baking dish. As I said, this is an interesting dish with an excellent flavor, and particularly good with fish.

Monday: "Hurry-Up Meals". And next Friday, just one week from today, we'll have a meal for the glorious Fourth.

